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Spartanburg Herald-Journal

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Families gathered, ate and prayed . . .



Present Cannon Methodist Church on camp site.



Oratory and religious fervor flourished.

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Only Memories Left of Famed Cannon's Camp Ground Religious Meets

BY FRED SMITH

"There was as much as a thousand people there from 20 miles around. The woods was full of teams and wagons hitched everywhere feeding out of the wagon troughs and stomping to keep off the flies. There was sheds made out of poles and roofed over with branches where they had lemonade and gingerbread to sell and piles of watermelons and green corn and such-like truck.

"The preaching was going on under the same kind of sheds, only they was bigger and held crowds of people. The benches was made of outside slabs of logs with holes bored in the round sides to drive sticks into for legs. They didn't have no backs. The preachers had

high platforms to stand on at one end of the sheds . . ."

"THE FIRST SHED we come to the preacher was lining out a hymn. He lined out 2 lines, everybody sung it, and it was kind of grand to hear it, there was so many of them and they done it in such a rousing way; then he lined out 2 more for them to sing—and so on. The people woke up more and more and sung louder and louder; and towards the end some begun to groan and some begun to shout. Then the preacher begun to preach and begun in earnest too; and went on, weaving first to one side of the platform and then to the other, and then a-leaning down over the front of

it with his arms and body going all the time and shouting his words out with all his might."

That is how Mark Twain described an old time camp meeting in "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn." It happened down Arkansas way, but it might have been written, with certain variations about Cannon's Camp Ground just a few miles east of Spartanburg.

CANNON'S CAMP GROUND is a quiet spot now with its red brick church and graveyard behind. There is not a trace of the huge wooden "arbor" where the congregation gathered; nor the rough board shacks which housed the visiting worshippers, nor anything

else. But in that open space, bordered by trees just below the present church, thousands of people used to meet in annual religious assemblies that were famous throughout this part of the South.

Cannon's Camp Ground was 120 years old last Monday, Sept. 24. The land was given to the Methodist Church by "Lige" Cannon as he was known, one of the leading citizens of the community. History does not record what that first meeting was like, but those that followed became known for their high quality and people flocked to Cannon's Camp Ground from far and wide.

In the beginning, meetings were held under a brush "arbor" like the one Mark Twain described, but

later a substantial board shelter with a shingled roof was built. It was open on 4 sides with a pulpit at one end around which was the "mourners' bench" reserved for repentant sinners who asked for special prayers or wished to give testimony. The ground was covered with straw and the congregation sat on hard, backless benches. On one side of the pulpit was a space for the Negro slaves who always turned out enthusiastically.

H. B. CARLISLE of Spartanburg remembers attending meetings at Cannon's Camp Ground as a small boy and later while he was a student of Wofford College. They were held about the middle of August when the crops had been

laid by and the country people could get away.

"They came in wagons and buggies from all over South Carolina," Mr. Carlisle recalls. "There were plenty from North Carolina and some from Georgia and Tennessee too. You'd see whole families, men, women, and children old and young, arriving with complete housekeeping equipment. The meetings lasted several days or more and the visitors would move into the rough wooden shacks around the camp ground, or 'tents' as they were called, and settle down for a pleasant stay."

Mrs. Perry Garrett who lives down the road a short distance from Cannon's Camp Ground also

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Wartime Now Thing of Past



Spartanburg County Foundation Health Matters



State Nurses Here Oct. 9

Education Group

Cannon Camp

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has vivid memories of the meetings held there.

"I'm not sure just how many people came," she said, "but it was always a big crowd, especially on Sundays. Maybe several thousand. The first service was at 7 in the morning, just a kind of prayer service for the people who were camping on the grounds. There was another at 9 and another at 11; by that time people were really flocking in. I've often seen so many the arbor wouldn't hold them all and they had to stand around outside. We'd have a recess for dinner and then meet again at 3 o'clock. The last meeting came after supper in the evening. So you see the folks had a pretty full day.

WHAT DISTINGUISHED the assemblies at Cannon's Camp Ground was the caliber of many of the men who preached there. While there was a certain amount of the emotional fireworks type of preaching so characteristic of the ordinary camp meeting, there was more sound doctrine preached by some of the ablest leaders of the Methodist Church.

"I remember how folks used to shout and cut up sometimes," Mrs. Garrett said. "There were preachers like that, too. But take it all around you heard more good, sensible preaching at Cannon's Camp Ground and less of the other kind." Writing in *The Carolina Spartan* of Aug. 15, 1888, Dr. J. W. Vandiver gave this graphic description of a Cannon Camp Ground meeting:

"As long ago as 1834 Davy Patterson, Lewis Cannon, Henry Emerson, John Tillotson, my father, William Cannon, Daniel Hammet, Carter Burnett, the Tuckers and many others moved slowly and orderly in with bedding, provisions, children and dogs on Thursday evening to worship 4 days or more in God's own Temple.

"One would spread the straw inside of the log tent, another coop the chickens, another fix up pegs upon which to hang their hats and shawls, another a temporary table on forked stumps, and so on till evening; and as daylight retired from the forest, temporary mounts equally distant from tents and brush arbor were lighted with a pile of pine knots, each giving ample light to the entire scene.

"SUPPER OVER, an experienced horn blower ascends the temporary pulpit made of logs and covered with planks, about 4 feet high, and after placing the horn to his lips, he sends out on the twilight air a long, shrill scream, turning himself round as he blows as if he were calling the nations to the great camp fires of the gospel.

"The sound of the horn was the signal for convocation around the crude altar made of poles in front of the pulpit; from time to time, when it sounded, all mouths were closed and psalms suspended, and all came to meet around the altar and listen to prayer, praise and preaching."

There were camp meetings still, but not like the picturesque gatherings.

There are camp meetings still, but not like the picturesque gatherings our fathers and grandfathers knew. Besides religious assemblies, these were important social occasions where friends and relatives got together and enjoyed themselves for a few days. To the country people especially the camp meetings were great events because they afforded a welcome break in the more or less steady routine of rural life.

IN THE LATE '80's, however, the meetings at Cannon's Camp Ground began to deteriorate. There was considerable serious drinking and assorted monkey-bushines among the visitors. Mrs. Garrett and others who were at Cannon's Camp Ground during its last days recall at least one occasion when it was necessary to call in the law.

So after about three-quarters of a century of meetings, the torn and the wooden tents were brought down. The grass trampled by thousands of feet grew rank and when August came around there were no more horses and wagons tied under the trees. Only a strange quietude the trees. You stand beside the red brick church and look toward the gentle depression where the camp ground used to be; and when you think what it was in other times, you could wish those good old days were back again.

and fluffy meringue around the edges.

PEACH CURTARD PUDDING

(Serves 6)

- 4 eggs
- 1-4 teaspoon salt
- 1-2 cup sugar
- 3 cups milk, scalded
- 1-2 teaspoon vanilla
- Peach halves
- Beat 4 egg yolks and 2 egg

Peach Custard Pudding Is Glamour Dish

Fruit and custard make an ideal dessert for neavier meals because they will satisfy the sweet tooth and do not give that "stuffed" feeling. Activa will find the combination an interesting variation from the usual run of desserts and children will like the wholesome-ness of the milk, eggs and fruit which it contains.

The custard is made in a porcelain enameled double boiler, the utensil with a smooth, sanitary finish that protects all delicately-flavored foods. As a finishing touch, the custard is poured into a porcelain enameled pudding pan and is topped with peach halves.

RIDE 'PIE WAGON' TO SCHOOL, WINTHROP, Mass. (UP).—Hundreds of Winthrop youngsters got their lifelines wish during a recent transportation strike. With buses out of circulation, the boys and girls did their riding in the police patrol wagon.

SO-EZY PUDDING or

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whites slightly, then add to milk the 2 remaining egg whites until with sugar and salt. Cook in top stiff and then adding slowly 3 tablespoons of sugar. Brown in the boiler for 2-3 minutes.

Add Vanilla. Place in a pudding dish and top with canned peach halves or fruitless and meringue. The meringue is made by beating washable coated fabrics.

ADD Something New TO YOU

